



Montana Crop & Livestock Reporter

survey results summary issued twice monthly by the
USDA, NASS, Montana Field Office

Issue: 06-03 Released: February 02, 2006

HIGHLIGHTS:

Cattle and Calf Inventory
Grazing Fee Rates
Sheep and Lamb Inventory
Wool production
Ag Prices Received
Farms and Land in Farms
Egg Production

Cattle and Calf Inventory

Montana's January 1, 2006 inventory of cattle and calves was 2.40 million head, up 2 percent from the 2005 inventory of 2.35 million head. Improved pasture conditions during the past year and continued high prices have contributed to producers holding back more cows, beef heifer replacements, and bulls than last year. The inventory of beef cows in Montana that had calved on January 1, 2006 was up 1 percent from a year ago to 1.45 million head. The number of milk cows in the state was up 6 percent from a year ago to 19,000 head.

Beef heifer replacements weighing 500 pounds or more were up 11 percent from 2005 to 445,000 head. This is the largest number of beef heifer replacements on record. Milk heifer replacements decreased 1,000 head from last year to 8,000 head. The number of other heifers weighing 500 lbs or more increased 8 percent from last year to 157,000 head.

The inventory of steers weighing 500 pounds or more was down 22 percent from 2005 to 160,000 head. The inventory of calves weighing less than 500 pounds, at 50,000 head, was unchanged from last year's record low inventory. Inventory of bulls weighing 500 pounds or more was up 22 percent to 110,000 head.

The number of cattle and calves on full feed that will be sent directly to slaughter decreased 8 percent from a year ago to 55,000 head. There were 1.48 million calves born during 2005, down 3 percent from the previous year.

All cattle and calves in the **United States** as of January 1, 2006, totaled 97.1 million head, 2 percent above the 95.4 million on January 1, 2005. All cows and heifers that have calved, at 42.3 million, were up 1 percent from the 41.9 million from last year.

Beef cows, at 33.3 million, were up 1 percent from January 1, 2005. Milk cows, at 9.06 million, were up 1 percent from a year ago. The 2005 calf crop was estimated at 37.8 million head, up 1 percent from 2004. Calves born during the first half of the year are estimated at 27.4 million, up slightly from 2004.

Other class estimates on January 1, 2006, and the change from January 1, 2005, are as follows:

- All heifers 500 pounds and over, 20.0 million, up 2 percent.

- Beef replacement heifers, 5.90 million, up 4 percent.

- Milk replacement heifers, 4.28 million, up 4 percent.

- Other heifers, 9.80 million, up slightly.

- Steers weighing 500 pounds and over, 16.9 million, up 3 percent.

- Bulls weighing 500 pounds and over, 2.26 million, up 2 percent.

- Calves under 500 pounds, 15.6 million, up 2 percent.

- Cattle and calves on feed for slaughter in all feedlots, 14.1 million, up 3 percent.

- The combined total of calves under 500 pounds, and other heifers and steers over 500 pounds outside of feedlots was 28.2 million, up 2 percent.

Montana and U.S. Grazing Rates

Grazing fees paid by Montana producers for grazing livestock on privately owned, non-irrigated grazing land was higher for all methods in 2005. The average amount paid for grazing livestock on an AUM (animal unit month) basis was \$16.20 per month, up \$0.30 from last year. Cattle producers paid \$18.70 per cow-calf pair in 2005, up \$1.30 per pair from the previous year. The average per head rate was \$17.30 per month, up \$1.10 from last year.

In the 17 states that estimate grazing fees in the United States, the average charge on an AUM basis was \$13.20 per month in 2005, up \$0.10 from the previous year. Cow-calf rates were \$15.20 per month, down \$0.10 and per head rates at \$14.00 per month, were up \$0.30 from 2004

All grazing fees are for privately-owned, non-irrigated grazing land. Rates charged for public land, irrigated land, and harvested cropland were excluded. The AUM rate includes reported AUM rates plus reported cow-calf rates that were converted to an

AUM basis. The cow-calf rate was converted to AUM basis using the following formula (1 AUM=cow-calf *0.833).

Sheep Inventory and Wool Production

Montana's sheep and lamb inventory was 295,000 head on January 1, 2006, down 3 percent from last year.

Breeding sheep and lamb numbers dropped 4 percent from 2005 to 270,000 head. Ewes one year and older were down 3 percent to 208,000 head. Rams one year and older, at 7,000 head, were unchanged from the previous year. Replacement lambs, at 55,000 head, decreased 3,000 head from a year ago. The 2005 lamb crop was 275,000 head, an increase of 2 percent from the 2004 lamb crop.

All market sheep and lambs on hand January 1, 2006 totaled 25,000 head, unchanged from 2005. Of that total, 6,000 head were sheep and 19,000 head were lambs. The market lambs by weight category are as follows: 5 percent weighed less than 65 pounds, 21 percent weighed 65-84 pounds, 58 percent were in the 85-105 pound category, and 16 percent were over 105 pounds.

Montana wool growers produced 2.5 million pounds of wool during 2005, up 1 percent from 2004. The 2005 average price per pound of wool decreased \$0.19 to \$0.98 per pound. The total value of all wool produced in 2005 decreased 16 percent to \$2.4 million. The total number of head shorn was down 3 percent from 2004 to 260,000 head. The average fleece weight increased from 9.3 pounds in 2004 to 9.6 pounds in 2005.

For the first time, Montana has published inventory numbers for goats. Milk goat inventory in 2006 decreased 7 percent from last year to 2,780 head, while meat and other goat inventory increased 8 percent to total 9,000 head on January 1, 2006. All other categories were not published but were combined with the total U.S. numbers.

For the **United States**, all sheep and lamb inventory on January 1, 2006, totaled 6.23 million head, up 2 percent from both 2005 and 2004. The inventory began increasing in 2005 and has shown two consecutive year to year increases for the first time since 1987 and 1988. (continued on page two)

Sheep Inventory (continued)

Breeding sheep inventory for the United States increased to 4.64 million head on January 1, 2006, up 2 percent from 4.53 million head on January 1, 2005. Ewes one year old and older, at 3.66 million head, were 2 percent above last year.

Market sheep and lambs on January 1, 2006, totaled 1.59 million head, down 1 percent from January 1, 2005. Market lambs comprised 95 percent of the total marketings. Twenty-seven percent were lambs under 65 pounds, 14 percent were 65-84 pounds, 24 percent were 85-105 pounds, and 35 percent were over 105 pounds. Market sheep comprised the

remaining 5 percent of total marketings.

The U.S. 2005 lamb crop was 4.13 million head, up 1 percent from 2004. The 2005 lambing rate was 115 lambs per 100 ewes one year old and older on January 1, 2005, up 2 percent from 2004. (continued on back page)

Cattle and Calves Inventory January 1, 2004-2006

Class of Livestock	Montana				United States			
	2004	2005	2006	'06/'05	2004	2005	2006	'06/'05
	1,000 Head				1,000 Head			
All Cattle and Calves	2,400	2,350	2,400	102%	94,888	95,438	97,102	102%
Cows & Heifers that have calved	1,490	1,450	1,470	101%	41,851	41,920	42,311	101%
Beef Cows	1,472	1,432	1,451	101%	32,861	32,915	33,253	101%
Milk Cows	18	18	19	106%	8,990	9,005	9,058	101%
Heifers 500 pounds and over	570	555	610	110%	19,344	19,572	19,978	102%
For beef cow replacement	420	400	445	111%	5,518	5,691	5,905	104%
For milk cow replacement	8	9	8	89%	4,020	4,118	4,278	104%
Other heifers	142	146	157	108%	9,806	9,763	9,795	100%
Steers 500 pounds and over	200	205	160	78%	16,277	16,476	16,923	103%
Bulls 500 pounds and over	90	90	110	122%	2,206	2,219	2,263	102%
Calves less than 500 pounds	50	50	50	100%	15,210	15,250	15,626	102%
Cattle on Feed	70	60	55	92%	13,813	13,745	14,132	103%

Calf Crop, 2003-2005

	2003	2004	2005	'05/'04	2003	2004	2005	'05/'04
Calves born during year (1,000 Hd)	1,540	1,520	1,480	97%	37,903	37,505	37,780	101%

Sheep, Lambs and Goats Inventory January 1, 2004-2006

Class of Livestock	Montana				United States			
	2004	2005	2006	'06/'05	2004	2005	2006	'06/'05
	1,000 head				1,000 head			
All Sheep and Lambs	300	305	295	97%	6,105	6,135	6,230	102%
Breeding sheep	280	280	270	96%	4,499	4,533	4,639	101%
One year old & older								
Ewes	220	215	208	97%	3,610	3,573	3,657	102%
Rams	7	7	7	100%	188	190	196	103%
Replacement Lambs	53	58	55	95%	702	771	786	102%
Market Sheep & Lambs	20	25	25	100%	1,606	1,602	1,591	99%
Sheep	2	3	6	200%	66	74	76	103%
Lambs	18	22	19	86%	1,540	1,528	1,515	99%
Milk goats	--	3.0	2.8	93%	--	285	288	101%
Meat and other goats	--	8.3	9.0	108%	--	2,150	2,260	105%

Lamb Crop, 2003-2005

Item	2003	2004	2005	'05/'04	2003	2004	2005	'05/'04
Lamb crop (1,000 head)	280	270	275	102%	4,140	4,096	4,125	101%

Sheep and Lambs Shorn and Wool Production and Value

Item	2003	2004	2005	'05/'04	2003	2004	2005	'05/'04
Number Shorn (1,000) Hd	272	267	260	97%	5,074	5,073	5,072	100%
Average Pounds per Fleece	9.5	9.3	9.6	103%	7.5	7.4	7.3	99%
Wool Produced (1,000 Lbs)	2,597	2,472	2,490	101%	38,299	37,622	37,232	99%
Wool:Dollars Per Pound	1.03	1.17	0.98	84%	0.73	0.80	0.71	110%
Total Value (1,000 Dollars)	2,675	2,892	2,440	84%	28,126	29,921	26,272	88%

Ag Prices Received for December

December full month crop prices were mostly higher when compared with November 2005. Montana's winter wheat average price was \$3.59 per bushel, up \$0.20 from the previous month; spring wheat rose \$0.03 to \$3.76 per bushel; and durum wheat prices jumped \$0.44 to \$3.80 per bushel. Feed barley prices were down \$0.01 from the previous month to \$1.65, but malt barley prices rose \$0.01 to \$3.04 per bushel.

The mid-January price for alfalfa hay was \$5.00 below December at \$62.00 per ton and all other hay dropped \$4.00 to \$62.00 per ton. Mid-January grain prices were mixed when compared with the previous month. Winter wheat price was \$3.44 per bushel, spring wheat was \$3.70 per bushel, feed barley was \$1.67 per bushel, and malt barley was \$3.28 per bushel.

Livestock prices for the full month of December were mostly lower when

compared with November 2005. Steer and heifer prices decreased \$1.00 to \$120.00 per cwt and cows were down \$0.70 to \$49.20. The average price for calves rose \$4.00 to \$147.00 per cwt, setting a new record high. Sheep prices were down \$0.30 to \$45.70 per cwt, but lamb prices were unchanged at \$124.00 per cwt. Milk prices decreased \$0.10 per cwt from last month to \$15.50 per cwt. Steer and heifer prices for mid-January were \$119.00 per cwt; cows were \$49.40 per cwt; calves were \$146.00 per cwt; and milk prices were \$15.00 per cwt.

U.S. prices for December and changes from November were as follows: winter wheat was \$3.46, up \$0.17, spring wheat was \$3.69, down \$0.04; durum wheat was \$3.39, up \$0.14; the all barley price was \$2.49, down \$0.15, and steer and heifer prices were \$99.90, up \$2.60 per cwt.

The U.S. mid-January winter wheat price was \$3.38 per bushel, spring wheat was \$3.67 per bushel, durum wheat was

\$3.24 per bushel, malt barley was \$2.72 per bushel, and feed barley was \$1.79 per bushel. Steer and heifer prices were \$101.00 per cwt, cow prices were \$46.50, calves were \$137.00 per cwt, all hog prices were \$41.60 per cwt, and all egg prices were \$0.610 per dozen.

The preliminary All Farm Products Index of Prices Received by Farmers in January, at 112, based on 1990-92=100, decreased 3 points (2.6 percent) from December. The Crop Index is down 3 points (2.7 percent) and the Livestock Index also decreased 3 points (2.5 percent). Producers received lower commodity prices for lettuce, turkeys, eggs, and hogs. Higher prices were received for cattle, oranges, corn, and cotton. The overall index is also affected by the seasonal change based on a 3-year average mix of commodities a producer sells. Increased average marketings of cattle, soybeans, corn, and strawberries offset decreased marketings of grapes, tomatoes, dairy, and cotton.

United States Index Summary

INDEX (1990-92=100)	December 2004	January 2005	December 2005	January 2006
Prices Received	111	111	115	112
Prices Paid, Interest, Taxes, & Farm Wage Rates 1/	134	137	143	145
Ratio 2/	83	81	80	77

1/ Prices paid indexes (1990-92=100) published monthly. 2/ Ratio of index of prices received by farmers to index of prices paid.

Montana Average Farm Prices Received

Commodity	UNIT	Monthly Average				Change From Previous		Mid-Month Average	
		Montana			U.S.	Month	Year	Montana	U.S.
		Dec. 2004	Nov 2005	Dec 2005	Dec 2005	Nov 2005	Dec 2005	Jan 15, 2006	Jan 15, 2006
		Dollars							
Winter Wheat	Bu.	3.56	3.39	3.59	3.46	+0.20	+0.03	3.44	3.38
Durum Wheat	Bu.	3.80	3.36	3.80	3.39	+0.44	NA	NA	3.24
Spring Wheat	Bu.	3.63	3.73	3.76	3.69	+0.03	+0.13	3.70	3.67
All Wheat	Bu.	3.62	3.53	3.66	3.54	+0.13	+0.04	3.54	3.48
Barley, All	Bu.	2.89	2.91	2.85	2.49	-0.06	-0.04	3.07	2.41
Feed Barley	Bu.	1.61	1.66	1.65	1.74	-0.01	+0.04	1.67	1.79
Malt Barley	Bu.	3.10	3.03	3.04	2.70	+0.01	-0.06	3.28	2.72
Oats	Bu.	NA	NA	NA	1.73	NA	NA	NA	1.67
Alfalfa Hay	Ton	78.00	72.00	67.00	97.70	-5.00	-11.00	62.00	95.60
All Other Hay	Ton	69.00	74.00	66.00	78.00	-8.00	-3.00	62.00	79.30
All Hay Baled	Ton	76.00	72.00	67.00	92.00	-5.00	-9.00	62.00	91.20
Steers & Heifers	Cwt	109.00	121.00	120.00	99.90	-1.00	+11.00	119.00	101.00
Cows	Cwt	49.30	49.90	49.20	47.20	-0.70	-0.10	49.40	46.50
Beef Cattle 1/	Cwt	87.50	108.00	98.80	93.60	-9.20	+11.30	102.00	94.40
Calves	Cwt	127.00	143.00	147.00	134.00	+4.00	+20.00	146.00	137.00
Sheep 2/	Cwt	51.10	46.00	45.70	46.90	-0.30	-5.40	NA	NA
Lambs 2/	Cwt	117.00	124.00	124.00	102.00	NC	+7.00	NA	NA
All Milk	Cwt	14.70	15.60	15.50	14.80	-0.10	+0.80	15.00	14.50

1/ Composite of steers, heifers, and cows. 2/ Mid-month prices for sheep and lambs discontinued.

Sheep Inventory (continued from page 2)

Shorn wool production in the United States during 2005 was 37.2 million pounds, down 1 percent from 2004. Sheep and lambs shorn totaled 5.07 million head, down slightly from 2004. The average price paid for wool sold in 2005 was \$0.71 per pound for a total value of \$26.3 million, down 12 percent from \$29.9 million in 2004.

All goat inventory in the United States on January 1, 2006, totaled 2.83 million head, up 4 percent from 2005. Breeding goat inventory totaled 2.35 million head, up 4 percent from 2005. All market goats and kids totaled 471,800 head, up 4 percent from a year ago. On January 1, 2006 meat and all other goats totaled 2.26 million head, up 5 percent from 2005. Milk goat inventory increased 1 percent to 288,000 head while angora goats were down 1 percent totaling 278,000 head. The 2005 kid crop totaled 1.84 million head for all goats, up 4 percent from 2004. Mohair production in the United States during 2005 was 1.82 million pounds. Goats and kids clipped totaled 273,000 head. Average weight per clip was 6.7 pounds. Mohair price was \$2.78 per pound with a value of \$5.1 million.

Farm Numbers and Land in Farms

The number of farms in Montana during 2005 was 28,000, unchanged from the previous year, Montana Field Office. Farms are sub-grouped by economic sales. The smallest economic sales category, \$1,000 to \$9,999, contains the largest number of farms at 11,900, up 100 farms from 2004. The next economic sales category, \$10,000 to \$99,999, had 10,300 farms in 2005 compared with 10,500 in 2004. For the economic sales category of \$100,000 to \$249,999, there were 3,700 farms, unchanged from the previous year. The economic sales category of \$250,000 to \$499,999 shows 1,400 farms in 2005, also unchanged from last year. The number of farms in the highest economic sales class, \$500,000 or more, was 700, up from 600 in 2004.

Land in farms is estimated at 60.1 million acres, unchanged from 2004. Montana's average farm size is 2,146 acres. Land in farms was also broken down by economic sales class. The breakdowns by sales

category and percent change from the previous year are as follows: \$1,000 to \$9,999, 4.2 million acres, unchanged from last year; \$10,000 to \$99,999, 17.4 million acres, down 2 percent from 2004; \$100,000 to \$249,999, 17.9 million acres, unchanged from a year ago; \$250,000 to \$499,999, 11.6 million, up 2 percent from 2004; and \$500,000 or more, 9.0 million, up 1 percent from last year.

The number of farms in the United States in 2005 is estimated at 2.1 million, 0.6 percent fewer than in 2004. Total land in farms, at 933.4 million acres, decreased 2.9 million acres, or 0.3 percent, from 2004. The average farm size was 444 acres during 2005, an increase of one acre from the previous year. The decline in the number of farms and land in farms reflects a continuing consolidation in farming operations and diversion of agricultural land to nonagricultural uses.

Farm numbers and land in farms in the United States are broken down into five economic sales classes. Farms and ranches are classified into these "sales classes" by summing their sales of agricultural products and government program payments. Sales class breaks occur at \$10,000, \$100,000, \$250,000, and \$500,000. Farm numbers declined in the three smallest sales classes and rose in the two largest sales classes. Part of the decline in the smaller sales classes was due to normal attrition, such as retirements. In addition, some operations transferred to larger sales classes by enterprise expansion. However, the majority of the changes in the sales classes were likely due to rising incomes. Many farms and ranches near the top of their sales class in 2004 moved into the next higher sales class in 2005 without adding land or otherwise expanding their operations. The largest percentage changes from 2004 occurred in the smallest and largest sales classes. Farm numbers declined 1.1 percent, to 1.17 million farms, in the \$1,000 - \$9,999 sales class. Meanwhile, farm numbers increased 3.8 percent, to 79,410 farms, in the \$500,000 or more sales class. The number of farms with less than \$250,000 in sales fell 0.8 percent from 2004 and the number of farms with \$250,000 or more in sales rose 2.4 percent.

Land in farms in the United States also shifted from lower sales classes to higher sales classes. In the \$1,000-\$9,999 sales

class, land in farms dropped 2.1 percent, to 118.4 million acres, while land operated by farms in the largest sales class, \$500,000 or more in sales, increased 3.0 percent, to 209.9 million acres. Farms with under \$250,000 in sales operated 571.3 million acres, or 1.7 percent fewer acres than 2004. Farmers in the two largest sales classes, representing operations with sales of \$250,000 or more, operated 362.2 million acres, up 2.0 percent from 2004.

U.S. December Egg Production

U.S. egg production totaled 7.79 billion during December 2005, up 1 percent from last year. Production included 6.70 billion table eggs, and 1.09 billion hatching eggs, of which 1.03 billion were broiler-type and 64 million were egg-type. The number of layers during December 2005 averaged 348 million, up 1 percent from a year earlier. December egg production per 100 layers was 2,237 eggs, up slightly from December 2004.

All layers in the U.S. on January 1, 2006, totaled 349 million, up slightly from a year ago. The 349 million layers consisted of 291 million layers producing table-type eggs, 55.6 million layers producing broiler-type hatching eggs, and 2.74 million layers producing egg-type hatching eggs. Rate of lay per day on January 1, 2006, averaged 71.8 eggs per 100 layers, up 1 percent from January 1, 2005.

Egg-type chicks hatched during December 2005 totaled 36.2 million, down 3 percent from December 2004. Eggs in incubators totaled 35.5 million on January 1, 2006 up 3 percent from a year ago.

Domestic placements of egg-type pullet chicks for future hatchery supply flocks by leading breeders totaled 248,000 during December 2005, up 6 percent from December 2004.

Broiler-type chicks hatched during December 2005 totaled 808 million, up 2 percent from December 2004. Eggs in incubators totaled 661 million on January 1, 2006, up 2 percent from a year earlier.

Leading breeders placed 7.11 million broiler-type pullet chicks for future domestic hatchery supply flocks during December 2005, up 5 percent from December 2004.

COMING IN NEXT REPORTER

Alfalfa Seed Production	U.S. & Canadian Cattle
Wheat & Barley County	Red Meat Production
Estimates	Egg Production
Crop Values	
Potato Stocks	
Farm Labor	

Peggy Stringer, Director
John Hilton, Deputy Director
Wendy Bruski, Statistical Info Assistant
10 W. 15th Street, Suite 3100, Helena, Montana 59626
406-441-1240 or 1-800-835-2612
www.nass.usda.gov/mt/ nass-mt@nass.usda.gov